

# COURTS on-line Electronic Filing of Claim Petitions and Answers Procedures Guide revision date 2/27/2004

Thank you for participating in the NJ Division of Workers' Compensation's Electronic Filing of Legal Pleadings program.

A PowerPoint tutorial on CD-ROM has already been sent to your firm's Contact Person. If your firm hasn't received this yet, please contact us and we will send you another copy.

Before you begin electronic filing, we encourage you to read this document and preview the tutorial as it gives you step-by-step procedures on how to use the new system. The procedures guide is broken into 3 sections addressing the different processing functions for petitioner's law firms, insurance carriers and respondent law firms. There is also a **Frequently Asked Questions** section at the end of the document. If at any time during the process you need assistance, please feel free to contact us at (609) 777-1926, (609) 984-2566 or (609) 777-4921 or you can e-mail us at courts@dol.state.nj.us.

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# Requirements for Participation:

## Who Can E-File?

You must be an active COURTS on-line subscriber to use the Electronic Filing system. Your employer must designate you as an approved "E-Filer" for your firm.

#### **Technical/System Requirements:**

The COURTS on-line website has been optimized for Microsoft Internet Explorer version 5.5 or higher. Netscape version 4.5 or higher is also acceptable but some of the document templates and images on the site may not appear correctly.

You must have Adobe Acrobat Reader installed (version 5.0 or higher). If you are using Adobe Acrobat version 6.0, you should check to make sure that you have version 6.0.1. This software is available as a free download off the Internet (www.adobe.com).

You must be able to open and download documents from the Internet.

Your screen resolution should be set to at least 800 x 600. If the setting is anything less than this, you may have to scroll left - right to see the full document template. To check your screen resolution (also called desktop area), right-click from your main desktop, select **properties** and then **settings**.

We encourage law firms to obtain TI, cable or DSL service to avoid response time issues.

Important Note: As long as your firm is an active participant in the electronic filing program, *electronically* filed legal pleadings will be sent to your firm <u>only</u> through the *COURTS on-line* website. Manually filed documents will continue to be sent to your firm through US Mail. Therefore, you should frequently check your Message Box in COURTS on-line to download the e-filed documents sent to your firm.

# New System Features:

When you log onto COURTS on-line and you have electronic filing access, you will see the addition of five new buttons on the left menu.

●E-Filing

This function allows you to select the type of document you wish to file electronically. During the initial pilot phase, only the Claim Petition and Answer to Claim Petition documents will be available. Eventually, there will be 12 different documents that can be electronically filed.



This will link to your Message Box, which is similar to an e-mail "inbox". All e-filed documents sent to your firm will appear here.

From this box, you can view and print individual documents. If a document requires an Answer, you can launch the document template from this view. You can also delete documents from this box that do not require a follow-up response from your firm.

You can also Filter your messages based upon the following criteria:

For **Attorneys**: Filing Date, CP #, Case Title, District Office, Insurance Carrier, and Document Type.

For **Carriers**: Filing Date, CP #, Case Title, District Office, designated Respondent Attorney, Petitioner Attorney and Document Type.

Print e-Filed Docs	This feature will allow you to batch print documents. This function is useful for carriers or law firms that receive a large volume of documents.
	You can select the documents to be printed with the following criteria:
	For <b>Attorneys</b> - Filing Date, Petitioner's SSN and Type of Document For <b>Carriers</b> : Filing Date, Petitioner's SSN, Type of Document and the Designated Respondent Attorney
Download Answers	You can download Claim Petition and Answer data through this function. The data, which is available as a text file, can be imported into your own company's database. This feature will be made available in the Spring 2004.
My File Cabinet	This is a temporary workspace where documents that have not been submitted to the Division can be saved and viewed later. Once the document has been submitted with the Division, it will be automatically deleted from the File Cabinet.

# Sample Workflow

The following workflow occurs when <u>all</u> the parties are electronic filing participants:

## **Electronic Filing of a Claim Petition**

- Petitioner's Attorney (P/A) hits the E-Filing button on the left menu and then selects "Employee Claim Petition".
- A CP template appears on the screen, which the P/A completes.
- The document is Saved and Printed at least once and then signed by the petitioner
- The document is then electronically submitted and P/A receives confirmation of filing.
- District Office and CP # are assigned automatically by the system
- CP is electronically received in the assigned WC district office and they create file.

## **Electronic Notice to Carrier and Respondent Attorney**

- COURTS on-line serves an electronic copy of CP to Carrier. Notice of filing appears in the Carrier Message Box.
- Carrier can print, individually or in batch mode, all electronically filed documents.
- If specific Respondent Attorneys have been pre-designated by carrier, they will also receive electronic notice of CP.
- If the carrier has not pre-designated an attorney, they can assign an attorney to the case from within the Message Box.
- The R/A will then immediately receive an electronic copy of the CP.

## **Electronic Answer to Claim Petition**

- R/A receives notice of the CP filing in their COURTS on-line Message Box
- To file an Answer, they can click on "Respondent's Answer to Claim Petition" from the case listed in Message Box or they can click on the E-Filing button on the left main menu and then select "Respondent's Answer to Claim Petition".
- An Answer to Claim Petition template will appear on the screen pre-filled with data.
- After data entry is complete, the document is Saved and Printed and then signed by the respondent attorney
- The document can then be electronically submitted.
- R/A receives confirmation of the filing and will also be advised if the petitioner's attorney and carrier are electronic filing participants
- The petitioner's attorney and carrier will receive the Answer in their COURTS on-line Message Box.
- The WC district office also receives the Answer electronically.

# Step by Step Tutorial

#### A. Petitioner Attorney View

Completing the on-line CP template Saving, Printing and Submitting to the DWC Managing your Message Box and printing your messages Batch Printing e-filed documents

#### **B.** Carrier View

Managing your Message Box and printing your messages Designating or Pre-Designating Respondent Counsel Batch Printing e-filed documents

#### C. Respondent Attorney View

Completing the on-line Answer template Saving, Printing and Submitting to the DWC Managing your Message Box and printing messages Batch Printing e-filed documents

## A. How to File an Electronic Claim Petition - Petitioner Attorney access:

Sign-on to COURTS on-line. As an authorized e-filer for an attorney firm or carrier, you will have access to the five additional buttons on the left menu.

Any messages in the message box for your company will appear on the screen when you sign on. Messages are listed with the most recent appearing at the top of the list.

If your firm does purely petitioner's work, the only messages you will receive are those that relate to newly filed Answers to Claim Petitions (or similar) documents. If your firm does both petitioner and respondent work, you will see both Claim Petition and Answer to Claim Petition documents in your message box.

## How to File a Claim Petition electronically:

- To file an electronic Claim Petition, select the E-filing button. Then select Employee's Claim Petition from the list of available documents for electronic filing.
- A screen appears for the entry of the Petitioner's Social Security Number. If the Petitioner does not have a
  Social Security Number, check the appropriate box and an identifier will be assigned when the claim is submitted
  and accepted. Select Continue.
- A Claim Petition template appears on the screen.
- Your name and address will appear in the Petitioner's Attorney block in the template. You cannot change your name and address on the template. If the information is incorrect, notify the Division immediately so that we can correct our system tables.
- If your firm is listed in our system as an active attorney on any other case for this petitioner, the current name, address, date of birth and sex in our database for your petitioner will be pre-filled in the template. You can make any corrections to this information.
- Complete the rest of the Claim Petition as you would normally. Hit Save while working on the document and
  when you are done. Hit Save & Print, when you are done and are ready to have the document signed by your
  client.

Things to keep in mind when data entering into the Claim Petition form:

1. City, state and zip code fields.

There are edits that will tell you if you have entered a city/zip code combination for New Jersey that is not in our table. There are some city/zip code combinations for municipalities not in New Jersey. If you are entering a city not in New Jersey and the correct city/zip code combination is not in our table, simply type in the city and zip code you have. There are no edits for out-of-state city/zip codes.

\*\*Note – In either the petitioner or respondent section, if you cannot find the zip code – municipality combination from our table or if you get an error upon saving the CP form, please confirm your zip code by going to the US Postal service website. (http://www.usps.gov) and then clicking on the "Find the Zip Code" link at the top left. You can type in the full address on this page and the USPS will provide you with all the valid zip codes for that address. If the zip code-combination you were searching for is found at the US Postal Service website, you will need to contact the Division at (609) 984-2566, (609) 777-1926 or you can e-mail <a href="mailto:courts@dol.state.nj.us">courts@dol.state.nj.us</a>. Please provide us with the complete mailing address. Save the document you are working on.

We will confirm the data and make the updates to our city/zip code table if warranted. Someone form the Division will contact you after the entry has been added to the table so that you can continue with the filing.

#### 2. Insurance carrier name and address

There is a look-up feature allowing you to find the carrier/self-insurer/governmental entity in our tables and select it for your Claim Petition. You must select a company that is listed in our system. All of the insurance carriers listed with the Compensation Rating and Inspection Bureau are in our insurance carrier table with addresses that the carriers have given to us for delivery of claim petitions. Our table also contains the names and addresses of the authorized self-insured employers, municipalities, counties and governmental entities.

## • If you know the name of the insurance carrier/self-insurer on your case:

Select the "Select from Table" button and then hit the search button. The carrier search box will appear. Here you can type in the name of the company you are searching for (full or partial). You can search for the name by using any of the following search options: "starts with", "contains" or "ends with". The system defaults to "contains".

If you cannot find the name of the company, please search again by modifying your search query. For example, instead of searching for the "Bureau of Risk Management", you may want to just search for "Bureau"; instead of searching for "A.B.C. Insurance", try searching for "ABC Insurance" or "A B C Insurance" or just simply "ABC".

If you find the company you were looking for, click on the hyper-linked text and you will be brought back to the main CP template. You will see the selected Carrier Name and Address pre-filled in the document.

If you still cannot find the insurance carrier or a self-insured employer/govt. entity within the Carrier Search screen, and you have exhausted all the various search options, there is an option to select "Unlisted". If you click on "Unlisted", you will be brought back to the insurance carrier section in the CP document template where you will be able to enter the name and address of the carrier/self-insurer directly into the template. \*\* Note - If the respondent is a self-insured company, you should enter the name of the self-insurer in the carrier field. Please do not type in "self" or "serve directly" in the Name field as our system does not recognize this.

When this Claim Petition is submitted and accepted, Division staff will do a further review of the name and address of the carrier/self-insurer and determine whether it should be added to the Division's carrier listing.

#### • If the respondent is uninsured:

Select the "**Unknown**" button. This will cause the Claim Petition to be sent to the respondent. Additionally, that Claim Petition will be referred to the Uninsured Employers Fund office for further processing. Please note that prior to filing the claim as an "Uninsured", you must confirm coverage for

the respondent at the Compensation Rating & Inspection Bureau website. They maintain an updated database of all workers' compensation policies (<a href="https://www.njcrib.com">www.njcrib.com</a>).

#### 3. Accident date

This is a required field.

Enter all dates in "mm/dd/yyyy" format (eg. 01/01/2004). You must enter the "/" as part of the dates.

If the claim is for an occupational exposure case, there is an option to enter the accident date as just the year (yyyy) or month/year (mm/yyyy). In order for this type of an entry to be accepted by the system, you must check off the occupational exposure box.

If you wish to clarify the exposure by putting in a range of dates or some other textual description, you can enter this information in the field called "Dates of Occupational Exposure".

## 4. Date Stopped Work / Date Returned to Work

These are not required fields.

If you wish to enter information in these fields, they must be formatted as "mm/dd/yyyy".

Note: You cannot enter in text, such as "NCLT", "TBS", "To Be Supplied", "Never Returned to Work", etc. If you wish to provide such information, you can enter this additional text in the free form space called "Other Pertinent Information".

#### 5. Date of birth

This is also a required field. The system will check the SSN/date of birth combination you have entered against our database. If we do not have the same date of birth for that SSN, we will present a warning/error message telling you there is a mismatch. If you get this message, please check with your client to insure that you have the correct SSN and date of birth.

If you submit your Claim Petition with this type of data mismatch, the case will be referred to DWC staff for review. The staff will look at the documents for both your case and the other cases that exist for that SSN. They may telephone or write to the involved attorneys to resolve the conflict.

# 6. Monetary amounts—gross wages, rate of compensation, temporary disability paid, permanent disability paid

The maximum amount that can be entered in any of these fields is 999999999.99. It is not necessary to enter any cents. If these amounts are whole dollars, just enter the dollar figure. For example, if the gross weekly wages are \$700.00, enter 700. **Do not enter a dollar sign.** Aside from the maximum number of characters, the system is not doing any editing or calculations of amounts.

**Note** – these fields only accept numerical values. You cannot enter in text, such as "NCLT", "Maximum Rate", "TBS", "To Be Supplied". If you wish to provide such information, you can enter this additional text in the free form space called "Other Pertinent Information". If nothing has been paid, you should enter in 0. You can leave these fields blank, but by doing so, an assumption will be made that the data will be provided at a later date.

## 7. Describe extent and character of injury

You can enter up to 340 characters in this field. Spaces between words and punctuation marks count as characters. Due to certain programming constraints, there is no stopping point or warning message as you are data entering in this box. However, if you have exceeded 340 characters, you will get an error message when you tab or click into the next field on the screen. When the description prints on the form, there are variations in the number of words that appear because of the lengths of words at the end of a print line and combinations of capital letters and punctuation marks. You should check how the form looks through "Save and Print" before finally submitting the claim petition.

## 8. Names and addresses of physicians and hospitals

You can enter as many as necessary. If you need more than 4 entries, select the "Add Additional Physicians" button. Up to 3 physician/hospital names will print on the front page of the printed claim petition. If you enter more than 3, all will print on a supplemental page.

#### 9. Check Box for Standard Occupational Disease Interrogatories

If you check the box demanding standard occupational disease interrogatories, the standard DWC OD interrogatory form will be attached to the filed document.

## 10. What other facts are there that you believe important?

This is a text block similar to the injury description block. It is limited to 320 characters. If you enter more than that, you will get an error message when you tab to another field.

#### 11. Additional Carriers Button

Selecting this button opens a new page, which looks like the supplemental claim petition page for entering additional carriers on a claim. You can add additional carriers to the case by going through the same process as #2 above. After you have selected the additional carriers, you can click on the "Save and Return to Main Page" button.

## Saving, Printing and Submitting the Document

- Save Allows you to save the form to your file cabinet if you are not ready to finalize and submit the form. You can save the document at any time. We recommend that you frequently Save the document while you are actively data entering so that you do not lose any data should your session time out or if the system goes down.
- Save and Print—Use this button when you are ready to print the form for the Petitioner's signature and your notarization. You are required to retain the signed and notarized copy of the Claim Petition in your files as you may be asked to present the document in court.
- After clicking on the Save & Print button, the Claim Petition will come up as an Adobe pdf document in a new Internet window. Depending upon your Internet settings, the new web page may come up in the minimized view. If that's the case, to open the new window, just click on the page from the task bar at the bottom of your PC window. You can then select the "print" button available on your Internet Browser to print the document.



#### Problems with Saving a document:

If the document is incomplete, you will get a pop up dialogue box that will tell you that the form is incomplete and it will ask whether you want to save anyway. You should select **Yes**.

If there are certain data formatting errors with the form, the errors will be listed at the very top of the document template (in red). In order to get the document saved, you should either correct those errors or delete the incorrect entry all together. For example, if you get an error message saying the date of accident is formatted incorrectly, you should go to the date of accident field and either correct it to the proper format or delete it altogether. You should then hit **Save** again. You can always update the information before you submit the final version of the document.

**Submit**—After the claim petition has been printed, signed and notarized, you may submit the claim. You will be asked to acknowledge that you have printed the document and had it properly signed and notarized. When the claim has been accepted, a message is returned to you stating the case number and assigned district office.

As confirmation of the filing, you can do a screen print of this message and keep it in your file or you can click on "**View Document**" and the actual filed CP will appear as a pdf document in a new Browser window. You can print and retain the document in your file.

After you have submitted the CP electronically, you can look up that case at any time in the future through any of the COURTS on-line search functions.

Managing your Message Box

The Message Box available in COURTS on-line is a multi-functional tool that if used effectively, can help firms monitor electronically filed cases. The Message Box is similar to an e-mail in-box. When a document is electronically sent to your firm, a message relating to that document will appear in the Message Box. Your company's Message Box will always appear by default as first screen after you sign on to COURTS on-line. Messages are listed with the most recent appearing at the top of the list.

If your firm does purely petitioner's work, the only messages you will receive are those that relate to electronically filed Answers to Claim Petitions (or similar) documents. If your firm does both petitioner and respondent work, you will see both Claim Petition and Answer to Claim Petition documents in your message box.

From your Message Box, you have the option of printing individual e-filed documents, filtering your messages and printing your messages. You can also delete messages relating to e-filed documents but only on those that do not require an Answer (i.e. claim petitions, dependency claim petitions, Re-openers, and Amendments to these documents). The messages for these documents will be automatically removed from your Message Box when the Answer document has been filed.

<u>Printing individual documents:</u> To view and print a single e-filed document, go to the related Message in the Message Box and click on the linked document under the column called "**Document E-Filed**".

The document will come up as an Adobe pdf document in a new Internet window. Depending upon your Internet settings, the new web page may come up in the minimized view. If that's the case, to open the new window, just click on the page from the task bar at the bottom of your PC window. You can then select the "print" button available on your Internet Browser to print the document.

<u>Filter Messages</u>: By clicking on the **Filter** button, you will be presented with a search screen where you can select different criteria to search for specific messages. You can search for messages by the following: **Date Range**, **Case Number**, **Case Title**, **District Office**, **Insurance Carrier** and **Document Type**.

You also have the option of having your messages sorted in a particular order: by **Date Filed** or by **Document Type**. Hit **Continue** and you will get the listing of messages that match your search criteria.

<u>Print Messages</u>: From here you can print the selected messages by hitting **Print Messages**. This will simply give you a print out of the messages themselves and not the actual e-filed documents.

## **Batch Printing:**

For firms that have a larger volume of cases, we have also provided an option for you to batch print documents based upon certain search criteria. To batch print e-filed documents sent to your company, click on the "**Print E-Filed Docs**" button

From this screen, you can set your filtering criteria. You have the option, but you don't have to, of selecting the dates of filing (from and to), and/or petitioner's SSN. You must select either the type of document (i.e. – Claim Petition, Respondent's Answer to Claim Petitioner, etc.) or the "all docs" button, which will pull up all the document types.

After you've selected your criteria, hit "Continue". The next screen will show all the documents that match. From here, you have the option of printing all the selected documents at one time by selecting the "Print All" function or going back to the prior filtering screen by hitting the Filter Documents button.

## B. Carrier View:

By participating in this program, carriers will receive notice of electronically filed legal pleadings through the COURTS on-line website. If documents have been e-filed, they can simply batch print the documents and then continue to process them the same way as if they had been manually filed. By downloading the documents through COURTS on-line, you avoid having to open each individual claim petition and service notice in your mail processing center as those documents will no longer be served on your company through US Mail.

E-filing also provides some additional bonus features for insurance carriers and self-insurers such as the ability to sort e-filed documents, the ability to save a copy of the document, the ability to electronically forward an e-filed document to a specific respondent attorney for handling as well as the ability to pre-designate up to 21 respondent law firms to automatically receive notice of all e-filed cases sent to your company. This last feature is particularly

helpful for carriers who use "house counsel" or refer cases to particular respondent attorneys based upon the county of the case.

**Sign-on to COURTS on-line.** As an authorized e-filer for a carrier, you will have access to four additional buttons on the left menu.

Any messages in the message box for your company will appear on the screen when you sign on. Messages are listed with the most recent appearing at the top of the list.

The messages in your Message Box will be electronically filed Claim Petitions (and similar documents) and electronically filed Answers to Claim Petitions (or similar) documents.

## Managing your Message Box

The Message Box available in COURTS on-line is a multi-functional tool that if used effectively, can help carriers monitor electronically filed cases. The Message Box is similar to an e-mail in-box. When a document is electronically sent to your company, a message relating to that document will appear in the Message Box. Your company's Message Box will always appear by default as the first screen after you sign on to COURTS on-line. Messages are listed with the most recent appearing at the top of the list.

From your Message Box, you have the option of printing individual e-filed documents, filtering your messages and printing your messages. You can also delete messages relating to e-filed documents but only on those that do not require an Answer (i.e. claim petitions, dependency claim petitions, Re-openers, and Amendments to these documents). The messages for these documents will be automatically removed from your Message Box when the Answer document has been filed. Lastly you have the option of designating a specific respondent law firm to answer the case on your behalf.

<u>Printing individual documents:</u> To view and print a single e-filed document, go to the related Message in the Message Box and click on the linked document under the column called "**Document E-Filed**".

The document will come up as an Adobe pdf document in a new Internet window. Depending upon your Internet settings, the new web page may come up in the minimized view. If that's the case, to open the new window, just click on the page from the task bar at the bottom of your PC window. You can then select the "print" button available on your Internet Browser to print the document.

<u>Filter Messages</u>: By clicking on the **Filter** button, you will be presented with a search screen where you can select different criteria to search for specific messages. You can search for messages by the following: **Date Range**, **Case Number**, **Case Title**, **District Office**, **Insurance Carrier** and **Document Type**.

You also have the option of having your messages sorted in a particular order: by **Date Filed** or by **Document Type**. Hit **Continue** and you will get the listing of messages that match your search criteria.

<u>Print Messages</u>: From here you can print the selected messages by hitting **Print Messages**. This will simply give you a print out of the messages themselves and not the actual e-filed documents.

## **Batch Printing:**

For firms that have a larger volume of cases, we have also provided an option for you to batch print documents based upon certain search criteria. To batch print e-filed documents sent to your company, click on the "**Print E-Filed Docs**" button.

From this screen, you can set your filtering criteria. You have the option, but you don't have to, of selecting the dates of filing (from and to), and/or petitioner's SSN. You <u>must</u> select the type of document (i.e. – Claim Petition, Respondent's Answer to Claim Petitioner, etc.) or the "all docs" field, which will pull up all the document types.

After you've selected your criteria, hit "Continue". The next screen will show all the documents that match. From here, you have the option of printing all the selected documents at one time by selecting the "Print All" function or going back to the prior filtering screen by hitting the Filter Documents button.

## **Designating Respondent Attorney:**

**Individually Assigning Respondent Counsel:** 

We are providing carriers the option of designating a respondent attorney on individual cases from within the Message Box.

By designating a respondent attorney from within COURTS on-line, the attorney will receive an instant notice of the efiled document in their firm's Message Box. They can begin processing the answer without any further delay.

To assign a respondent attorney on a case, go to the specific message in your Message Box and click on the button with 3 dots under the column "Designate Attorney".

This will open up the Attorney Search box. From here you can search for the name of your respondent attorney. After you have found the name, simply click on the hyper-linked name and you will be brought back to the Message Box. The attorney you've just selected will be pre-filled in the Designate Attorney section. To forward the message to that attorney, you would click on the "**Forward**" button on the right side.

If you cannot find the name of your attorney in the Attorney Search box, chances are they are not e-filers. You can select the "**Manual**" option, which will bring you back to your Message screen. You will then have to print the document and manually forward it to your respondent attorney as you do currently.

## Assigning Respondent Counsel for all your cases in advance (Pre-Designation):

We have also provided an option for your company to pre-designate specific law firms to always receive notice of e-filed documents sent to your company. You may assign respondent counsel on your cases based upon the county of where the case is assigned. We can accept up to 21 different law firms, corresponding to all of the counties in New Jersey. If you are interested in this feature, you can contact the Division at <a href="mailto:courts@dol.state.nj.us">courts@dol.state.nj.us</a> and request the application.

## Changing Respondent Attorney after they have been designated:

If for some reason you have to remove the assignment of a case from a particular attorney who has already been designated, you can do it in the following way:

Go to the Notice of CP message in the Message Box and click on the Attorney Search button . Search for the name of the new attorney and then select it by clicking on the hyperlinked name. If the new attorney is not an e-filer select "Manual".

You'll be brought back to the Message Box. Hit the **Forward** button. Immediately, the new designated attorney, if one has been selected, will receive the notice of the CP filing in their Message Box and the original attorney will receive a notice that their designation has been withdrawn.

## C. Respondent Attorney View:

Sign-on to COURTS on-line. As an authorized e-filer for an attorney firm or carrier, you will have access to the five additional buttons on the left menu.

Any messages in the message box for your company will appear on the screen when you sign on. Messages are listed with the most recent appearing at the top of the list.

If your firm does purely respondent work, the only messages you will receive are those that relate to newly filed electronic Claim Petition (or similar) documents. If your firm does both petitioner and respondent work, you will see both Claim Petition and Answer to Claim Petition documents in your message box.

Filing an Answer electronically:

To file an Answer to a claim petition electronically, you can do it in one of 2 ways.

Click on the E-Filing button from the main menu on the left side.
 Select "RESPONDENT'S ANSWER TO CLAIM PETITION" from the list of documents. You will then be asked to enter the CP# of the case and the petitioner's social security number. If the numbers match what we have in the database, you will get a pre-filled Answer template.

You can also file an Answer on a specific case from within the message box: The notice of a claim petition will appear in your message box if that CP was filed electronically, if the insurance carrier is also an e-filer and if they have designated you as their respondent attorney for this case. This message will stay in this box until your firm files an Answer.

To file an Answer from within the Message Box, go to the case you want to file an Answer for and click on "**RESPONDENT'S ANSWER TO CLAIM PETITION**" listed under the response column. The Answer template will appear, pre-filled with data from the e-filed claim petition.

Once the Answer document template comes up on your screen, you can fill in the fields as you would normally.

Things to keep in mind when data entering into the Answer form:

## 1. Changing the Insurance carrier/self-insurer

If you pull up the Answer template directly from the CP Filing message in your Message box, you <u>cannot</u> change the name of the carrier/self-insurer.

If you go through the main E-Filing menu to file the Answer, you have the option of correcting the name of the carrier/self-insurer, as follows:

If the original claim petition was filed against the wrong carrier/self insurer or if it was filed inaccurately as uninsured, you can add the correct carrier/self-insurer to the case by clicking on "Select another carrier", located right underneath the carrier section. This will get you to a new screen that lists all the carriers/self-insurers on the case. If you don't see the carrier you wish to file an Answer for, click on the button "Add New Carrier" and you will be provided the Carrier Search box.

Here you can type in the name of the company you are searching for (full or partial). You can search for the name by using any of the following search options: "starts with", "contains" or "ends with". The system defaults to "contains".

If you cannot find the name of the company, please search again by modifying your search query. For example, instead of searching for the "Bureau of Risk Management", you may want to just search for "Bureau"; instead of searching for "A.B.C. Insurance", try searching for "ABC Insurance" or "A B C Insurance" or just simply "ABC".

If you still cannot find the insurance carrier or a self-insured employer/govt. entity within the Carrier Search screen, and you have exhausted all the various search options, there is an option to select "**Unlisted**".

After you've selected the correct carrier (or the unlisted selection), you will be returned back to the page that lists all the carriers for that case. Place a check in the "Select to Continue" column next to the carrier/self insurer you want to file an Answer for.

The new carrier name/address will now be pre-filled in the Answer template. If you had selected "**Unlisted**", you will have to type in the name and address of the new carrier in the Insurance Carrier section. \*\* **Note** - If the respondent is a self-insured company, please do not type in "**Self**" in the Name field as our system will not recognize this.

## 2. Correct Name of Respondent if incorrect

If the respondent name was misspelled on the original claim petition, you can indicate the correct name in this field. The field can accommodate up to 40 characters (includes spaces and any punctuation).

### 3. Correct Date Accident

If the accident date in the original CP was incorrect, you can indicate the correction in this field. Enter all dates in "mm/dd/yyyy" format. You must enter the "/" as part of the dates.

## 4. Date Respondent had Knowledge & Notice / Date Stopped Work / Date Returned to Work

If you wish to enter information in these fields, it must be formatted as "mm/dd/yyyy".

Note: You cannot enter in text, such as "NCLT", "TBS", "To Be Supplied", "Never Returned to Work", etc. If you wish to provide such information, you can enter this additional text in the free form space called "Other Pertinent Information".

# 5. Monetary amounts—gross wages, rate of compensation, temporary disability paid, permanent disability paid

The maximum amount that can be entered in any of these fields is 999999999.99. It is not necessary to enter any cents. If these amounts are whole dollars, just enter the dollar figure. For example, if the gross weekly wages are \$700.00, enter 700. Do not enter a dollar sign. Aside from the maximum number of characters, the system is not doing any editing or calculations of amounts.

In the section for **Permanent Disability** paid, if you want to report a payment here, you can enter in the percent of disability, the # of weeks, the rate and the total dollar amount paid. In the % of disability section, you will see that there is no space to enter in the part of the body (i.e. total, leg, arm, etc). This is an error with the form and will be corrected in the next round of programming changes to the system. For now, you can simply enter in just the percentage without the body part.

**Note** – these fields only accept numerical values. You cannot enter in text, such as "NCLT", "Maximum Rate", "TBS", "To Be Supplied". If you wish to provide such information, you can enter this additional text in the free form space called "Other Pertinent Information". If nothing has been paid, you should enter in 0.

## 6. Names and addresses of physicians and hospitals

You can enter as many as necessary. If you need more than 4 entries, select the "Add Additional Physicians" button. Up to 3 physician/hospital names will print on the front page of the printed claim petition. If you enter more than 3, all will print on a supplemental page.

## 7. Check Box for Standard Occupational Disease Interrogatories

If you check the box demanding standard occupational disease interrogatories, the standard DWC OD interrogatory form will be attached to the filed document.

## 8. Other Pertinent Information?

You can enter up to 340 characters in this field. Spaces between words and punctuation marks count as characters. Due to certain programming constraints, there is no stopping point or warning message as you are data entering in this box. However, if you have exceeded 340 characters, you will get an error message when you tab or click into the next field on the screen. When the description prints on the form, there are variations in the number of words that appear because of the lengths of words at the end of a print line and combinations of capital letters and punctuation marks. You should check how the form looks through "Save and Print" before finally submitting the document.

## 9. Additional Page Button

If you need additional space for your Answer that cannot be accommodated in the "Other Pertinent Information" section, you can select this button, which will open up an additional page of free-form space. After you have completed typing on this page, you can click on **Save** and you will be returned back to main document. In the final printed version of the document, this page will be an attachment to the main document.

Saving, Printing and Submitting the Document

**Save**—Allows you to save the form to your file cabinet if you are not ready to finalize and submit the form. You can save the document at any time. We recommend that you frequently **Save** the document while you are actively data entering so that you do not lose any data should your session time out or if the system goes down.

**Save and Print**—Use this button when you are ready to print the form. You are required to retain the signed and notarized copy of the Answer in your files as you may be asked to present the document in court.

After clicking on this button, the Answer document will come up as an Adobe pdf document in a new Internet window. Depending upon your Internet settings, the new web page may come up in the minimized view. If that's the case, to open the new window, just click on the page from the task bar at the bottom of your PC window. You can then select the "print" button available on your Internet Browser to print the document.



## Problems with Saving a document:

If the document is incomplete, you may get a pop up dialogue box that will tell you that the form is incomplete and it will ask whether you want to save anyway. You should select **Yes**.

If there are certain data formatting errors with the form, the errors will be listed at the very top of the document template (in red). In order to get the document saved, you should either correct those errors or delete the incorrect entry all together. For example, if you get an error message saying the date of accident is formatted incorrectly, you should go to the date of accident field and either correct it to the proper format or delete it altogether. You should then hit **Save** again. You can always update the information before you submit the final version of the document.

**Submit**—After the Answer has been printed at least once, you may submit the claim. When the Division has accepted the Answer, a message is returned to you stating that the document has been successfully submitted. The message will also advise you on the e-filing status of the petitioner's attorney and the insurance carrier. If the petitioner's attorney and the carrier are e-filers, the Answer will be forwarded to them electronically and there is nothing further for you to do. If the petitioner's attorney and/or the carrier are not e-filers, you'll have to forward a copy of the Answer to them through US Mail.

## Managing your Message Box

The Message Box available in COURTS on-line is a multi-functional tool that if used effectively, can help firms monitor electronically filed cases. The Message Box is similar to an e-mail in-box. When a document is electronically sent to your firm, a message relating to that document will appear in the Message Box. Your company's Message Box will always appear by default as first screen after you sign on to COURTS on-line. Messages are listed with the most recent appearing at the top of the list.

If your firm does purely respondent's work, the only messages you will receive are those that relate to electronically filed Claim Petitions (or similar) documents. If your firm does both petitioner and respondent work, you will see both Claim Petition and Answer to Claim Petition documents in your message box.

From your Message Box, you have the option of printing individual e-filed documents, filtering your messages and printing your messages. You can also delete messages relating to e-filed documents but only on those that do not require an Answer (i.e. claim petitions, dependency claim petitions, Re-openers, and Amendments to these documents). The messages for these documents will be automatically removed from your Message Box when the Answer document has been filed.

<u>Printing individual documents:</u> To view and print a single e-filed document, go to the related Message in the Message Box and click on the linked document under the column called "**Document E-Filed**".

The document will come up as an Adobe pdf document in a new Internet window. Depending upon your Internet settings, the new web page may come up in the minimized view. If that's the case, to open the new window, just click on the page from the task bar at the bottom of your PC window. You can then select the "print" button available on your Internet Browser to print the document.

<u>Filter Messages</u>: By clicking on the **Filter** button, you will be presented with a search screen where you can select different criteria to search for specific messages. You can search for messages by the following: **Date Range**, **Case Number**, **Case Title**, **District Office**, **Insurance Carrier** and **Document Type**.

You also have the option of having your messages sorted in a particular order: by **Date Filed** or by **Document Type**. Hit **Continue** and you will get the listing of messages that match your search criteria.

<u>Print Messages</u>: From here you can print the selected messages by hitting **Print Messages**. This will simply give you a print out of the messages themselves and not the actual e-filed documents.

## **Batch Printing:**

For firms that have a larger volume of cases, we have also provided an option for you to batch print documents based upon certain search criteria. To batch print e-filed documents sent to your company, click on the "**Print E-Filed Docs**" button.

From this screen, you can set your filtering criteria. You have the option, but you don't have to, of selecting the dates of filing (from and to), and/or petitioner's SSN. You must select either the type of document (i.e. – Claim Petition, Respondent's Answer to Claim Petitioner, etc.) or the "all docs" button, which will pull up all the document types.

After you've selected your criteria, hit "Continue". The next screen will show all the documents that match. From here, you have the option of printing all the selected documents at one time by selecting the "Print All" function or going back to the prior filtering screen by hitting the Filter Documents button.

# Help:

If you need assistance with electronic filing, you can contact one of the following telephone numbers:

(609) 984-2566 (609) 777-1926 (609) 777-4921

Or you can e-mail us at courts@dol.state.nj.us.

# Frequently Asked Questions:

Searching for or adding Carriers to a case
Municipality/Zip Code table
Saving and Printing difficulties
Managing the Message Box and general workflow
Designation/Pre-Designation of Respondent Counsel
Miscellaneous

## Searching for or adding Carriers to a case

- **1Q.** I am trying to file a claim petition against a self-insured employer. In the past, I would put in "**Self**" in the carrier section and the Division would accept the filing. Can I do the same when I file electronically?
  - A. In the electronic filing program, you must select the name of the self-insured employer or governmental entity through the search box in the carrier section of the claim petition. If you cannot find the name of the company in our table, you have the option of selecting "unlisted". By selecting "unlisted, you can then enter the full name and address of the company. For further details, click here.
- **2Q.** I am trying to file a claim petition on an occupational exposure case. There are multiple insurance carriers involved. How can I add the additional carriers to the case?
  - A. At the very top and very bottom of the Claim Petition template, there is a button called **Additional Carriers**. If you select this button, the document you are currently working on will first be saved. You will then be presented with a supplemental claim petition page, which will allow you to add up to six additional carriers onto the case. You can add additional carriers by going through the insurance carrier search process as outlined in the Claim Petition filing section.
- 3Q. I am a respondent attorney and I am trying to file an Answer to a Claim Petition. I went through the main E-filing menu to open the Answer template instead of through the Message Box. In the pre-filled Answer template, a specific carrier was listed but I did not want to file an Answer on behalf of that carrier, so I clicked on the Select Another Carrier button. I then went into the carrier search screen. The carrier I was looking for could not be found so I selected "unlisted" and then manually typed in the name and address of the carrier into the carrier section. However, upon Saving the document, I receive an error message. What do I do at this point?
  - A. This error condition only happens when there is more then 1 "unlisted" carrier on a particular case. Our system has no way of differentiating between multiple "unlisted" carriers and therefore cannot properly recognize the second "unlisted" carrier. When this situation occurs, you have 2 options:
    - If you are under time constraints, you should proceed to file the Answer manually.
    - If you can wait a few days, **Save** the document into your File Cabinet and then notify the Division that you were unable to locate a particular carrier. The Division will research and where appropriate will add the name and address of the company you were searching for into the table. Once that is done, you can go back to the Answer document and then add the correct carrier to the case through the carrier search feature.

## Municipality/Zip Code table

- 4Q. I am working on a claim petition and I clicked **Save**. I received the following message: "Zip code does not match municipality". I checked with my client and confirmed that the zip code and municipality that I entered was correct. I went into the e-filing municipality/zip code search table and typed in the municipality and I got a different zip code than what I have in my records. I then did a search on the zip code and that also gave me a different city name. What do I do?
  - A. Please read the City, state and zip code section for more details.

## Saving and Printing difficulties

- **5Q.** I finished typing up a Claim Petition and I went to **Save and Print** the document. I received a warning message advising that the petitioner is already in the system but with a different date of birth. I know my information is correct, can I proceed any way or should this be something I need to be concerned about?
  - A. What this simply means is that the Division has another case in our system with the same Social Security number but with a different date of birth. By getting the warning message, we are simply asking you to double-check your information. You can still proceed with the filing but after you submit the Claim Petition with this type of data mismatch, the case will be referred to DWC staff for review. The staff will look at the documents for both your case and the other cases that exist for that SSN. They may telephone or write to the involved attorneys to resolve the conflict.

You will get similar warning messages for mismatches involving the petitioner's social security number and petitioner's name.

- **6Q.** I just finished up a document and I clicked on the **Save & Print** button. The document does not come up. What should I do?
  - **A.** Make sure there are no errors with the form. If there are errors, they will be listed at the very top of the document template. If that is the case, please see question #7 below.

If there are no errors with the form, please note that the document comes up as an Adobe Acrobat PDF document in a new Internet window. You may want to check the task bar at the bottom of your PC window to see if a new Internet window is open. Sometimes, depending upon your settings, new web pages may come up in the minimized view or it may come up behind the screen you are currently in. If that's the case, to open (maximize) the new window, just click on the page from the lower task bar.

If you still cannot view the document, make sure you have Adobe Acrobat Reader, versions 5.0, 6.0.1 or higher. As a test, try opening up the following PDF document: <a href="http://www.nj.gov/labor/wc/forms/onlineapp.pdf">http://www.nj.gov/labor/wc/forms/onlineapp.pdf</a>.

If you can't open this document, you probably do not have the software or the software may not be loaded properly on your Internet Browser. To download the software, you can go to <a href="https://www.adobe.com">www.adobe.com</a> and follow the instructions on how to download the <a href="https://example.com">FREE</a> Adobe Acrobat Reader.

If the second Internet window comes up on your screen but remains grayed out, check the version of your Adobe Acrobat Reader. If it is version 6.0, make sure it is the upgraded version (6.0.1). If you need to upgrade to this version, open Adobe Acrobat 6.0 Reader and select, the menu **Help** and then **Updates**. Choose the prompted updates and install them and the reports will start appearing from within the browser. Or alternatively downloading the latest 6.0.1 reader from the adobe website (<a href="http://www.adobe.com/support/downloads/main.html">http://www.adobe.com/support/downloads/main.html</a>) will also solve the problem.

Lastly, if all else fails, you should make sure that your Internet browser settings are set to enable you to download data from the Internet.

If you are still having problems, please contact our help desk staff at (609) 777-4921.

- 7Q. The system won't let me Save or Save & Print the document I am working on. What should I do?
  - **A.** If the document is incomplete, you will get a pop up dialogue box that will tell you that the form is incomplete and it will ask whether you want to save anyway. You should select **Yes**.

If there are errors with the form, the errors will be listed at the very top of the document (in red). In order to get the document saved or printed, you should either correct those errors or delete the incorrect entry all together. For example, if you get an error message saying the date of accident is formatted incorrectly, you should go to the date of accident field and either correct it to the proper

format or delete it altogether. You can always update the information before you submit the final version of the document. You should then hit **Save or Save & Print** again.

You should receive a confirmation message at the very top of your form indicating that the form was successfully saved.

- **8Q.** While I am working on a document, the session times out and I lose all the information on that document. I thought I had hit the "Save" button but I still cannot find the document in My FileCabinet. Why did this occur?
  - A. The system will time out your session after 20 minutes. Once you successfully Save your document, the 20 minute session time will start again. You will know that the "Save" was successful when you receive a confirmation message at the very top of your CP/Answer form.

If you receive an error message after hitting the "Save" button, your document has <u>not</u> been saved. In order to Save the document, you must either correct those errors or delete the incorrect entry all together. Then you should hit "Save" again.

## Managing the Message Box and general workflow

- **9Q.** I work for an insurance carrier. Many of our employees have COURTS on-line access. Giving everyone effling rights will be very hard to manage and we are afraid that documents will get missed. Do you have any recommendations for carriers on how to use the e-filing system effectively?
  - **A.** One recommendation would be to assign an individual and a back-up, to check messages routinely. That person can also be responsible for printing the documents in lieu of receiving the documents through US Mail. After the documents are printed, staff can process them according to existing procedures.

If you wanted to use the **Designate Attorney** feature, you can give e-filing access rights to your claims staff so that each adjuster can designate the respondent attorneys for their own cases. Alternatively, you can centralize this function to one individual and a back-up.

Using the **pre-designation** feature will allow you to skip this step of actively assigning a respondent attorney on every case from within the Message Box.

- **10Q.** Why can't I delete messages from my Message Box that relate to e-filed claim petitions?
  - A. The system will only allow you to delete messages that do not require a follow-up response. Having these messages remain in the Message Box will serve as a reminder to you that the related Answer has not been filed for that case. Claim Petition messages will be automatically deleted when the related Answer document is filed, either manually or electronically. Messages relating to Answers to Claim Petitions can be deleted at any time.
- **11Q.** I am a respondent law firm and we receive a lot of messages in our Message Box. Is there an easy to way to manage this?
  - **A.** For Respondent Attorneys, having messages in your Message box simply means that there is an open claim petition that has not yet been answered. You can manage the Message Box in a number of ways. The following are just 2 examples:

If your firm assigns cases to staff attorneys based upon the vicinage of the case, attorneys in your firm can view Messages that belong to them by going through the Filter Message feature in the Message Box. From that screen, they can select messages based just upon the vicinage.

If your firm simply wants to receive notices of electronically filed documents but is not interested in using the box as a way of reminding them of unanswered petitions, you can designate someone on your staff to check messages routinely and to run the batch print functions to obtain copies of newly filed petitions. When your firm is ready to file Answers to Claim Petitions, you can go through the E-Filing option directly, available on the left side main menu. **Note** - **You can file an Answer electronically on any claim petition, even those that have been filed manually.** 

#### **Designation/Pre-Designation of Respondent Counsel**

- 12Q. I am an insurance carrier and we opted to use the "Pre-Designation" feature so our respondent attorneys receive notice of e-filed documents at the same time we receive our notice. However, we have a case that has to be re-assigned to another attorney. How can we go about doing this since our pre-designated attorney has already received a message about the filing in their Message Box?
  - **A.** It is very easy to over-ride an earlier designation. You can view details on how to do this in the Changing Respondent Attorney section.
- **13Q.** We are interested in receiving electronically filed documents through the COURTS on-line system. However, we use a lot of different respondent attorneys to handle our cases and the criteria for assigning cases is not consistent. Do we have to electronically designate an attorney to handle our e-filed cases?
  - **A.** No. Designating (or Pre-Designating respondent counsel) is not mandatory. Carriers can opt to just simply print e-filed documents from the COURTS on-line system and if they prefer, they can manually forward the document to their counsel for further action.
- 14Q. I am interested in using the Pre-Designation feature. How can my company sign-up?
  - **A.** Please contact our technical support staff at (609) 777-4921 and request the Pre-Designation of Respondent Attorney application.

#### Miscellaneous

- **15Q.** My firm has opted to participate in electronic filing. Can I receive notices of electronically filed documents through US Mail in addition to receiving them through the COURTS on-line system?
  - **A.** As long as one subscriber from a law firm or carrier is designated as an active electronic filing participant, that firm will receive notices of electronically filed legal pleadings <u>only</u> through the COURTS on-line website.
- **16Q.** My firm uses standard text on our legal documents. Can we run macro programs that will automatically fill in our text into some of the fields in the COURTS on-line templates?
  - **A.** Unfortunately, you cannot run a macro program within the *COURTS on-line* system. To save some time with data entry, you may want to consider having your firm's standard verbiage available in a Microsoft Word or WordPerfect document. You can then copy and paste the text into the appropriate sections of the template.
- **17Q.** I would like to enter the terms "TBS", "To be submitted", "NCLT", "Max Rate", etc, in the monetary and date fields on the CP (or the Answer) but I get an error message indicating that the format is incorrect. How can I get around this format requirement?
  - **A.** These fields require the data to be in either a date format (mm/dd/yyyy) or a monetary format. If your firm typically uses TBS or NCLT, keep these fields blank and use the free form space under "Other pertinent information" to further elaborate.